

ished prose style, who was markedly influenced by Taoism. Liu Hsin has already been noted. In the course of the Han thirteen of the ancient works were set up as canonical—the *Ching*, the *Shu Ching*, the *Shih Ching*, three versions of the *CWun Cti'iu* with three different commentaries on it, the *Li Chi*, the *Chou Li*, the *I Li*, the *Hsiao Ching*, the *Lun Yu*, the *Erh Ya*, and the *Meng Tzu Shu*. The *Erh Ya*, it may be noted, is often called the oldest Chinese dictionary—although considerable parts of it are at least as recent as the third century B.C.

Editorial work was especially needed, for inventions in writing materials and the new forms of the characters encouraged by them were fast making the older script intelligible only to the expert. Wooden and bamboo tablets gave place to silk fabrics and, in the Later Han, to paper. The traditional date for the first manufacture of paper, A.D. 102 or 105, is only approximate, and the new material must have grown out of many tentative experiments. However, examples of true paper dating from the Han and fabricated from the bark of the mulberry tree, from hemp, and from rags, have been discovered and show what was taking place. With the new material and with the brush pen, new forms of the characters came into common use and displaced the old. Li Ssu, the great minister of Shih Huang Ti, is credited with having developed, as we have seen, probably out of the form current in the state of Ch'in, a script which he and his master tried to make universal. The new styles then developed, it may be noted, were to persist: documents dating from the Han have forms of the characters which differ little from those in use

to-day. In the second century A.D. the classics were engraved on stone slabs. From these slabs they could be reproduced by xub-bings on paper, a technique which was in use by this time. It must be added that the invention of so perishable a writing material as paper, some centuries before printing made possible the rapid and cheap multiplication of books, was not without its disadvantages, for practically no manuscripts of early date have come down to us.

The preservation of the early literature was complicated by the disasters which civil strife brought upon the libraries of the time. When the capital was sacked at the end of the Ch'in, when more destruction overtook the palaces at the overthrow of Wang